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SAVE EUROPE NOW

By Alexander Boeker

Europe is in mortal danger of total disintegration. The decline is not confined to one field. It is economic, political and spiritual.

The cure for Europe's economic ills is production; for her political ills, cooperation; for her spiritual ills, hope. At present Europe has none of these in adequate measure.

Enduring peace in Europe requires that the Continent be treated as a whole, made up of equal partners working for the common good. But this requires unanimity among the Allies and, above all, agreement on aims and methods between Russia and the West.

The events of the last year have shown that the Eastern and Western ends of the alliance do not see eye to eye on the shape of the new Europe. Even now the principal Powers are unable to agree on peace settlements, as evidenced by Mr. Byrnes' call for a new Four Power meeting to avert postponement of the scheduled Peace Conference.

Must Europe's reconstruction therefore wait indefinitely? The answer is simple: Europe cannot wait. Russia has already drawn this conclusion and has proceeded to mold Eastern Europe in its own image.

Eastern Europe must in time be won back for Western civilization, but it will surely be lost if Western Europe meanwhile sinks into chaos, and thence into slavery.

Europe, west of the Elbe River, can still be saved by an emergency operation, sponsored by Great Britain and the United States. Such a plan would require that, for a transition period of reconstruction, the whole area, including Italy and Scandinavia, should be treated as a single unit without discrimination. The objective of the project would be the speedy restoration of elementary living standards for all — the restoration of agriculture, the construction of housing, the revival of industry, transportation and trade.

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II

About 195 million people live west of the Elbe River, exclusive of the 49 million of the United Kingdom and Eire whose fate is inextricably linked with that of the Continent. In 1928, the last normal year, they accounted for 31.1 per cent of world trade. This alone shows the importance of Western Europe for the prosperity of the United States and of the world. In the same year, the United Kingdom accounted for 13.1 per cent of world trade, and the Soviet Union for only 1.3 per cent.

In basic foodstuffs and industrial raw materials Western Europe is normally a deficit area, but not a pauper. In average years it produces about 70 per cent of its food and 60 per cent of its industrial raw materials. The remainder has to be imported in exchange for finished goods. Western Europe's greatest assets are therefore its industrial apparatus and its transportation system, which in normal years are a close second to those of the United States.

These assets must be restored to full production with the least possible delay, if Europe is to live. It is for the time being irrelevant where these assets are and by whom they are owned. Such questions can be settled when the crisis has been overcome.

There is ample precedent for an international pooling of resources for a common purpose. During the war, the United Nations created the United Maritime Authority shipping pool which later was broadened to include neutral Sweden. It successfully allocated available shipping space according to need. Participating nations were obliged, if need be, to employ their ships without regard to financial considerations.

There are now in operation a European Central Inland Transport Association (ECITO) and a European Coal Organization (ECO) performing functions similar to the wartime shipping pool. These useful organs should be strengthened and broadened to include neutral and ex-enemy States -- with Germany represented for the time being by trustees.

An extension of the same pattern into other fields is urgently needed. It will be difficult to control the production of food on an international basis, but fertilizer and agricultural machinery could well be thus produced and distributed. This is the only way to prevent a recurrence of the present famine.

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ECITO's efforts to restore European transportation will be fully successful only if sustained by factories producing rolling stock and other equipment. ECITO might provide the framework in which all plants producing transportation equipment could be organized for maximum production, including the steel mills on which they depend.

The same system should be applied to other products which are critically short: textiles, building material, furniture. In this manner Western Europe could be put back on its feet and would cease being an economic liability for the United States.

III

Policies presently pursued are unfortunately almost the opposite. Food shipments to Europe are still inadequate in view of the prevailing famine. The British loan is still unratified. A French loan, badly needed to stabilize political conditions in that country, is only in the stage of preliminary discussion. Everywhere wartime mentality prevents economic and political reason from asserting itself even in the face of disaster.

The neutrals of the last war are a favorite target of economic discrimination injurious to general recovery. Though the European war has long been over, two to three billion dollars of neutral assets in America are still frozen and over 2,000 firms in European neutral countries continue to be blacklisted. The present financial squeeze play against Switzerland greatly hampers that country's contribution to European reconstruction.

A virtual economic boycott continues against Spain because of its dictatorial form of government, while economic aid is given at the same time to the more ruthless dictatorship of the Soviets. When the Spanish Government last summer offered to house and feed 50,000 homeless children of war-ravaged countries, it was informed that its political complexion made such work of mercy undesirable.

In Germany wrecking crews are now at work dismantling and blowing up factories that are badly needed to produce precious goods for the restoration of Europe. Despite appalling famine, fertilizer plants and shops making agricultural machinery are kept shut. Although Europe suffers from the worst transportation crisis in its history, a recent inter-Allied agreement went so far as to prohibit the manufacture of locomotives until 1949.

There is not even logic in this destructiveness, because at the same time there is a

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general clamor for German coal. Why should not German factories also work for the common good? Are locomotives, fertilizer and clothes any more of a war potential than coal?

IV

There must be a moratorium on the economic provisions of the Potsdam Agreement for the duration of the European production crisis. It makes no sense to weep about the suffering of Europe's millions while at the same time pursuing policies which increase and perpetuate that suffering.

When the reparations provisions of the Versailles Treaty proved inoperative, President Hoover and Secretary Stimson wisely announced a moratorium on all obligations arising out of the last war. Today's need for a similar moratorium is incomparably greater than in 1931.

When the emergency is over, when normal living conditions have been restored, the time will be more auspicious for the settlement of reparations and other claims arising out of the war. Operations which would now spell the certain death of the patient could then be performed with less danger. Meanwhile habits of cooperation will have developed which might provide a pattern for the future.

By advocating a modification of France's annexationist stand on Rhine and Ruhr, the French Socialists and President Felix Gouin have placed the welfare of the Continent above a narrow conception of national interest and have thus encouraged those who want to see France play a leading part in the reconstruction of Europe.

A Western Europe restored to economic health and political sanity would once again become a center of attraction for Eastern Europe. This would facilitate the necessary reintegration of the two halves. If Western Europe continues to be economically sick and politically divided, it will itself eventually be integrated into the Eastern system.

If there has to be competition with Russia, let it be one of construction rather than destruction.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. III - No. 15

By Frank C. Hanighen April 10, 1946

While the affray in the UNO Security Council has gone from the punch-to-punch phase of ten days ago to the present tit-for-tat basis -- with no assurance that it won't revert to the former brutish amenities -- and while those who claimed the Iranian affair had proved the efficiency of UNO are now wishing they had made their prematurely jubilant pronouncements conditional instead of definite, Secretary of State Byrnes is tackling another problem.

The problem is far more important than is currently disclosed, or explained. Mr. Byrnes is going to Paris on April 25 to try to speed the conclusion of the peace treaties. Both he and Mr. Bevin anxiously desire this. The fact is that the Western Powers want settlement of the peace treaties so that, among other objectives, the occupation armies can be withdrawn from Europe. Britain and the United States not only want to "bring the boys home", but also they are most eager that the Russian boys go home. For the Russian armies are living like locusts on Central and Eastern Europe, and their presence offers a potential threat to the independence of other European countries so long as the current state of suspicion exists between East and West. For the same reasons, Russia wants to keep its forces in Europe. Hence the lack of agreement on these peace treaties, in which evacuation terms would be specified, between the representatives of the Great Powers who have been concerned with the matter for the past six months.

That Byrnes may not have an easy time with the Russians when he reaches Paris appears from the following reliably reported story. In the drafts for the Romanian, Bulgarian and Hungarian treaties submitted to the London representatives by Russia, there is an important provision which has jammed agreement. Russia does offer to withdraw armies of occupation. But Russia also insists on a qualifying clause which would permit her to keep armed forces in those countries for the purpose of "maintaining lines of communication" to Austria. Furthermore -- and here is the pay-off -- these troops must have the right to live on the countries occupied. No one in Washington has a plausible explanation of how Messrs. Byrnes and Bevin will pry the Russian bear away from his bone.

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Elements in the Truman Administration have tried to keep President Hoover from visiting Germany during the course of his current tour of famine-stricken Europe, according to well-informed sources. They reportedly would like to prevent the publicity which would be given to the starvation conditions in occupied Germany by any such humane and expert observer as the former President. It may be significant that Mr. Hoover made a complete circuit -- France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Britain, the Lowlands -- around Germany during the early stages of his trip. It was also noticeable that General Clay, commander of the American forces in Germany, flew to Brussels to see Mr. Hoover. In any case, why shouldn't Mr. Hoover visit Germany, since he did visit Italy, also a former enemy country? And if he does go to Germany, why has he deferred to the last a visit to the country with the largest population and with the most acute food problem in Europe?

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The election of Congressman B. Carroll Reece to be Chairman of the Republican National Committee was a victory for the conservative wing and "hinterland" of the Party. Mr. Reece, from Tennessee, a former isolationist, was more acceptable to the heavily Mid-Western strength of the Party than other candidates. He defeated Mr. John Hanes, bellwether of the Willkie and Stassen followers, and former Senator John Danaher of

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Connecticut. The latter's views on foreign policy were in his favor, but the fact that he was an "Easterner" told against him. Party dopesters are not sure that the Committee was altogether wise in preferring Mr. Reece to Mr. Danaher. Republicans have the predominantly agricultural states (outside of the South) "in the bag". They should "shoot" for the urban masses; Mr. Danaher, a "liberal" in domestic politics and close to labor unions, would have exerted a strong appeal to these voters.

But the victory of Mr. Reece also exemplifies the "roll in" expectations of many Republican leaders. They believe that the Party does not need to make concessions to New Dealish sentiment and that Truman will prove so weak a candidate and the Democratic Party will be so divided that the Republicans will be carried in on the tide: "In 1948, we can win with a Chinaman." It remains to be seen whether they will heed the warning of cautious advisers -- "Yes, but let's not nominate one."

Mr. Reece, in a radio interview on April 3, defended himself against the charge that he isn't a "liberal": "That word 'liberal' has so often been used so loosely that it may be well to give my own interpretation of it. Historically, a 'liberal' was one who sought to put a limit upon the powers of Kings or upon the powers of Parliaments. Today, in the United States the true 'liberal' is the man who fights encroachments by the Federal Government upon the freedom of the citizen." The new Chairman apparently has been reading Herbert Spencer who said, "The function of Liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the powers of kings. The function of true liberalism in the future will be that of putting a limit to the powers of Parliaments."

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The State Department's recent Latin American policy, marked by attacks on the Argentine Government by Mr. Spruille Braden, is in complete rout. The Department has announced that it will proceed to enter into a Western Hemisphere defense pact with all the American republics, including Argentina -- on condition that the newly elected Argentine Government of Colonel Perón will take steps to aid "elimination from this hemisphere of Axis influences". But informed sources believe that the qualification is merely face-saving for the United States, and that the preparation and agreement of such a pact will proceed without undue trouble. Additionally, the appointment of Mr. George Messersmith as Ambassador to Buenos Aires is interpreted as another move in the regularization of relations with Argentina and readmittance of that republic into the Pan-American family. Mr. Messersmith is known to have been an advocate of such a pact and privately critical of the Braden policy. The cause of the State Department's reversal, it is said, was the adverse reaction (reported in this column on April 3) of Latin American republics to the Braden big stick policy.

The measure of the Department's undignified somersault may be gauged by referring to what it said in the ill-starred Blue Book note of February 12, accusing the Perón Government of "complicity with the enemy" and constituting a "vicious partnership of Nazi and native totalitarian forces". The Blue Book went on: "The question is whether the military régime, or any Argentine Government controlled by the same elements, can merit the confidence and trust which is expressed in a treaty of mutual military assistance among the American republics." This week, the State Department had to eat these bitter words -- washing them down with the face-saving qualification above mentioned -- reposing trust in what it had called an "untrustworthy" régime.

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A revival of the famous American Peace Mobilization -- the pro-Soviet movement which fought the Roosevelt interventionist policy in 1939-41 -- took place in Washington on April 5-7, under the fresh billing of "Win the Peace Conference". Its antics inspired the label of "The Commerce Department Follies", because its sessions were held -- through the courtesy of Henry A. Wallace's Department -- in the Commerce Auditorium. Many figures long familiar in Communist and Communist-front organizations were prominently

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present, as well as others -- a Coughlinite leader was spotted among the cheering delegates. There were passed resolutions marked by a meticulously servile adherence to the current attitudes of Moscow on such subjects as Transjordania, China, Iran, etc. On Palestine, the meeting was disarmingly impartial; it came out four-square for both Jews and Arabs -- which is typical of the Kremlin's straddling policy on that issue. Another resolution opposed any foreign loans unless the receiving country guaranteed that the money would not oppress colonial peoples. Thus the delegates knew what they should think about the British loan. But there was a demand for an immediate loan to Russia, without any qualifications. One delegate, John Gutknecht, a municipal judge from Chicago, struck a discordant note when he said that he felt at times that he "was not in a pro-American or pro-United States movement, but in a pro-Russian movement. . . . I think we are off on the wrong track when we damn America and damn the British Empire, but praise Russia."

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Britain is leading not from strength (as you would infer from Senator Pepper's attacks on the British Empire) but from weakness. It is no secret among British leaders that they hold fewer face cards than safety demands, or as some British who deprecate any confession of weakness say, "Even the strongest power can over-strain itself" (Economist, March 2). Therefore, the British are seeking in various places on the globe (NMG on March 27 mentioned India) to reduce their commitments.

The fact is that Ernest Bevin is trying to utilize to Britain's advantage the aspirations of native peoples for independence, particularly when they feel threatened by the Russians. While making concessions, Bevin is enough of an imperialist to attempt to obtain in exchange continuance of some British control, guidance, or connection with the Empire. Thus Bevin is pursuing a more imaginative and progressive policy which promises to pay dividends, in place of the outworn old-style imperialism of Churchill.

This pattern is appearing more clearly in the Middle East in the past few weeks, as may be seen in the following developments: (1) Emir Abdullah of Transjordania has just concluded a treaty with London by which the latter dropped the old League Mandate over that country and recognized its independence as a sovereign state. But the excellent national army will continue to be staffed by British officers. (2) Bevin has announced that he will go to Egypt to conclude talks designed to revise the ten year old Anglo-Egyptian treaty. The Egyptians want evacuation of British troops from their territory and complete possession of the Sudan. British concessions are anticipated which will strengthen Anglo-Egyptian ties with wide effects among other Arab states. (3) A free country can prove a better asset to Britain than an enslaved one -- as Turkey, allied with Britain, shows. On March 30, Turkey and Iraq signed a mutual assistance pact, which observers regard as a defense against Russia. Both of these states have a Kurdish problem and the Russians are reportedly backing the Kurdish tribes in that region. Moscow radio attacks this new alignment. (4) The same radio is not modest about its dislike of a proposed treaty between Turkey and Syria; and (5) of one between Iraq and Transjordania. Thus, whatever happens in Iran, the British are trying to ensure that a band of states friendly to themselves lie between the strategic Persian Gulf and the Suez Canal.

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Japan votes this week in a general election which observers describe as probably the most free and complete expression of the public will in Japanese history. There is keen interest in the results as they reflect strength or weakness of the Left. In past elections, the Left was never able to make its opposition effectively felt partly because of divisions within its ranks and inability to form a common front. Thus in the February, 1928, election, the Left was divided into Labor-Farmer Party, Japan Labor Party, Proletarian Party, Japan Farmer Party and other leftist parties. Although they polled a grand total of 469,000 votes -- considered at the time as an impressive showing -- they elected only 7 members to Parliament out of 95 candidates. This aspect of the present election will be studied closely as an indication of how stable are conditions in Japan.

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Notes and Quotes

Vera Brittain, in her London news letter, makes two generally unrecognized points, at the same time drawing attention to the losses and plight of the Jewish community in Europe: "In Letter No. 101, I reiterated two points made in the 90th issue: First, that many who protested against the Nazi persecution of the Jews seemed to be more interested in punishing the executioners than in saving their victims; secondly that the longer the War continued, the worse the position of those victims was likely to become. Today, seven months after the end of the War, both those contentions are proved correct.

"At the European Conference of the World Jewish Congress held in London from August 19th - 23rd, 1945, Dr. Nahum Goldmann stated that if the Joint Distribution Committee . . . had not been deterred from speedy action for 2-1/2 years by a 'complacent atmosphere', thousands of Jews might have been saved. If even the more fortunate Jews themselves did not fully realize the effect of the War on their European brothers, how far did their non-Jewish fellow-citizens realize it? How far indeed, are the actual facts of Jewry's martyrdom realized by us today?"

"The recent War reduced the seven million Jews who in 1939 lived in Europe outside of Russia, to one million and a half. If a negotiated peace or some other unlikely miracle had prevented the outbreak of War, the persecution of the Jews might have continued, but it would have been confined to the Jewish population of the pre-war German Reich (339,892 -- a figure which included Austria and Sudetenland, but not Danzig and Memel).

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Apparently we have been all wrong about freedom of the press, judging by the following definition: "Warsaw, March 28. AP -- President Bierut has told reporters that truth in a free press is determined by the opinion of the majority. He said Polish censorship is designed primarily to prevent newspapers from 'straining relations with the Allied powers'. It isn't against freedom of the press, if we don't permit newspapers to print lies', he said. 'Freedom of the press should serve the truth. The majority in every community determines what's truth -- not the minority'."

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A passage in a letter from an American officer in Germany: "If ever a people were more desperately in need of help than the Germans at the present moment, history has failed to record it. Oddly enough, we have committed so many injustices as victors that what we do now will only be paying back a debt. In the true sense, it can not be looked upon as charity. We have done so much looting, assaulting of peaceful citizens, withholding of food (to the point that infant mortality in Karlsruhe ran 60 per cent -- 590 infant deaths per 1000 births), post-war destruction of private property, that we are now in the situation of having to make repayment in some measure to re-establish ourselves in the eyes of the intelligent and cultured German. To maintain that the Nazis were worse does not save us entirely from a hypocritical situation. We can only prove to the Germans the sincerity of our ideals by rising above the Nazis and not in descending to their level."

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"In an advancing society, any restriction on liberty reduces the number of things tried and so reduces the rate of progress. In such a society freedom of action is granted to the individual, not because it gives him greater satisfaction but because if allowed to go his own way he will on the average serve the rest of us better than any orders we know how to give." Dr. H. B. Phillips in the American Scientist.

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